

President's Report

by Neil Hanlon

We are more than two years into this pandemic and the strains of meeting “virtually” are mounting. Through it all, however, I am very proud of the many members of the CAG who made use of whatever means available to stay connected. In my report last year, I wrote that I looked forward to an “incremental easing of COVID restrictions in the months ahead.” I will admit to thinking then that we would be further along this path by now, but I know it was best that we have proceeded with caution.

Much has been accomplished in the past twelve months. The two ad-hoc committees established last year (i.e., Indigeneity and Decolonization, and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) have held roundtable discussions and reported back to the executive with recommendations for next steps. We also established a Membership Working Group that distributed an online survey in both official languages last Fall. The survey generated valuable information about the priorities and preferences of geographers across Canada, including those who are not CAG members. The hard work of these three groups is an important first step towards renewing and revitalizing our membership.

I am also grateful to the regional divisions for continuing to find innovative ways to hold virtual gatherings and annual general meetings. While all but one meeting was cancelled in 2020, I am pleased to report that each of our five regional divisions found some way in which to hold a gathering this year.

Communications and affiliations:

The CAG website is updated regularly, and continues to serve as a hub for various activities, including conference webpages and announcements. We produced 21 issues of *GeogNews*, two Newsletters, and the *CAG Annual Directory*. *CAGlist* remains a vital resource for keeping members connected and informed. We also continue to maintain a social media presence on Twitter and Facebook.

Due to the scheduling challenges of holding a virtual annual conference (e.g., reduction in the number of daily sessions to accommodate participants across five time zones), a number of key meetings had to be scheduled outside of the 2021 conference program. Study groups were asked to hold their business meetings separately from the conference. A number of study group chairs commented that these meetings resulted in higher than anticipated attendance and allowed more time for discussion. The CAG executive likewise scheduled separate meetings with study group chairs (August) and department chairs (September), both of which were well-attended.

In an effort to reach out to Francophone department chairs and faculty, Nathalie Gravel (CAG Vice-President) and Jean Hébert (Vice-President of the RGQ) arranged a virtual tour of 16 departments in Quebec, New Brunswick and Manitoba. These consultations yielded valuable

information and ideas to inform the association as we move ahead with efforts to make CAG activities, resources and processes more accessible and inviting to Francophone members.

In terms of our work with other scholarly bodies, the association continues to maintain ties with affiliate organizations. We renewed our membership in the Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences (CFES), and I am pleased to welcome Krys Chutko as our new representative on CFES. We also maintained a membership with the Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) this year. While it has been a number of years since a CAG conference was held jointly with Congress, our membership fees ensure that the association is represented in FHSS advocacy work and lobbying of the federal government for increased funding of post-secondary research. Finally, our affiliation with the International Geographical Union (IGU) was renewed again this year, thanks to the continued support of the National Research Council of Canada. This Fall, the CAG was a signatory to the *International Geographical Societies Joint Declaration on the Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies*.

Developments from the CAG Office:

Former CAG Executive Director, Kathryn (Katie) Laferrière, has left the CAG to embark on a career in the federal civil service. Katie worked with us for five years and, over that time, continued to grow and develop in her role. She will be sorely missed, and we wish her well in her new position with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. A search is underway to find a new Executive Assistant. We ask for your patience as we look to hire and train someone to take on this position in the weeks ahead.

Updates about the CAG Executive:

A Francophone Student Councillor position was created at the 2021 executive meetings, and an election to fill the role was held in Fall 2021. I am pleased to welcome Leena Lamontagne-Dupuis for a two-year term that commences at the AGM.

The full executive met informally twice in the months since the 2021 annual meetings, first in November and more recently in April. The main objective of these sessions is to provide updates to the full executive about the work of various standing and ad-hoc committees, but we were also able to discuss issues arising in the regional divisions and at the national office.

The formal Executive Meetings will be held virtually again this year. The first meeting takes place the week prior to the annual conference in preparation for the AGM, while the second meeting, which initiates the work of the 2022/23 executive and establishes various standing and ad-hoc committees, is scheduled during the week following the AGM.

The Canadian Geographer:

The current publishing agreement with Wiley expires in 2023. Over the past several months, members of the CAG executive, along with Nadine Schuurman (Editor-in-Chief), held several meetings with representatives of Wiley International to discuss Wiley's offer to renew our

relationship for another five years. While we have made good progress, there are still a few issues to be resolved.

We will turn our attention very shortly to recruiting the journal's next Editor-in-Chief. Nadine Schuurman has held the role since 2011, but is stepping down in 2023. Over those twelve years, she has assembled a well-functioning editorial team and carried out major changes in operations and editorial approach that have kept the journal vibrant, up-to-date with changes in publishing practices and technologies, and healthy according to various metrics of impact and influence. We are very grateful for the vision and leadership that Nadine has brought to our journal these many years.

The other big change in the works involves the journal's name. At last year's AGM, several CAG members, including Vice-President Nathalie Gravel, pointed out that the French name is expressed in a masculine form that creates the impression that our journal does not welcome or value the contributions of female scholars. The executive held a number of consultations with members of the journal's Editorial Team, including Martin Simard (French Editor) and Nadine Schuurman, and representatives of Wiley International, who expressed support for this initiative provided we find a name that does not require major changes in journal indexing. We considered a number of options, and the name that emerged as the clear choice is *Canadian Geographies / Les géographies canadiennes*. We believe this new name better reflects the diversity of scholarship found in the journal, sends a clear message of inclusiveness, and continues to express an obvious affiliation with the association. We expect the name change to be rolled out in 2023.

Awards:

At the 2021 Annual General Meeting, the following CAG Awards were presented:

- **The Award for Scholarly Distinction in Geography:** Dr. Susan Elliott, University of Waterloo
- **The Award for Excellence in Teaching Geography:** Dr. Nicole Laliberté, University of Toronto Mississauga
- **The Julian M. Szeicz Award for Early Career Achievement:** Dr. Michelle Ruddy, University of Waterloo
- **The Starkey-Robinson Award for Graduate Research on Canada:** Dr. Paul Nesbit, University of Calgary
- **The Robin P. Armstrong Memorial Prize for Excellence in Indigenous Studies:** Emmelie Paquette, MA, Carleton University

Upcoming Conferences:

CAG

CAG 2022 – virtual, hosted by Toronto Metropolitan University, 30 May - 3 June 2022.

CAG 2023 – to be held in person, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), tentatively scheduled 8-12 May 2023.

Regional Divisions

Atlantic Division (ACAG)– organized by Saint Mary’s University, dates TBD

Regroupement des géographes du Québec (RGQ) – virtual, organized by Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), 16-18 November 2022

Ontario Division (CAGONT) – host and dates TBD

Prairie Division (PCAG) – organized by the University of Winnipeg, dates TBD

Western Division (WD-CAG) – host and dates TBD

Membership data:

The most recent membership numbers are presented in Table 1, with corresponding figures dating back to 2012 for comparative purposes.

Table 1: CAG Membership – 2012 to 2021

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*	2019*	2020*	2021*
Regular Members	437	426	381	346	285	253	201	297	227	289
Student Members	378	332	329	390	274	341	239	322	237	293
Other	280	265	284	293	313	280	137	85	69	102
Total	1095	1023	994	1029	872	874	577	704	533	684

*Excludes complimentary members (e.g., honorary past presidents, undergraduate award winners), but includes affiliate members (AAG & RGS-IBG).

As evident in the table, we experienced growth in each category of membership in 2021, no doubt reflecting the fact that we were able to hold an annual conference, even if only in a virtual mode. While these data are encouraging, we are by no means out of the woods, and a return to pre-pandemic figures may be hampered by the necessity to hold a second consecutive virtual meeting.

Concluding comments:

As I near the end of my term as President, I am grateful for what has been achieved on behalf of the CAG these past two years. It has been a privilege to get to know and work with so many fellow geographers from across the country. The entire CAG executive has been generous of their time and talents these past many months, and several have done so in spite of health issues, job actions, or other hardships. I wish to extend special notes of appreciation to Nathalie Gravel, the incoming president, and Joseph Leydon, CAG Secretary-Treasurer. These two individuals have worked tirelessly over the past twelve months to help steer the association through challenging and uncertain times. Finally, I want to extend my gratitude and best wishes to the entire membership, and I look forward to seeing many of you in person at CAG 2023.